

ART. XXXVII.—*Appleby Grammar School.* By The Rev.

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HOW far back we may date the origin of this Grammar School, is an open question. We come across its traces in the middle of the fifteenth century ; but it hardly seems then in its first youth. Rather “the school-house” had already become to the town’s folk familiar as any household word. In the year 1453, the narrow lane leading from Kirkgate is named “school-house gate” in a contemporary deed. This points to the existence of a school here a considerable time previously. It is probably within the mark to put it as then a century old.

The Grammar School was closely connected with the chantries, and through them with the burgesses of the borough. Whether or not the chantry priests were the schoolmasters from the very first, later on, at all events, we find such to be the rule.

Now we must bear in mind that the chantry of St. Mary was founded in 1286 or about 167 years prior to the document in which “school-house gate” occurs. The ancient mansion house of the chantry adjoined the present school.

In the year 1478, Thomas Whinfell held together the two chantries of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, in St. Lawrence, and that founded by English in St. Michael’s church. It is presumed that this was in consideration of his teaching school, a common arrangement in those days.

In 1515, Richard Garnett, vicar of St. Lawrence, was party to an agreement whereby Leonard Langhorn, chaplain of the chantry of St. Mary covenanted to officiate in the church and teach school, for which he was to receive 7 marks (£4 13s. 4d.) and to have the orchard and all the fruits thereof, together with hay to feed a horse.

Three

Three years later (10 Henry VIII., 1518), the mayor, bailiffs, and commonalty of the borough grant the said Langhorn for life the chantry of St. Mary, and further, considering that the said chantry is not sufficient for the sustenance of one chaplain, they empower him to hold the other two. On his part, he covenants to teach one grammar school except when sick or on pilgrimage or when the chantry property was wasted by the wars of the Scots. In 1533 there was a similar appointment of Edward Gybson, priest.

In a record of the valuation in the first fruits 26 Henry VIII., 1534, there is an entry stating "The chantry or grammar school in the town of Appleby is worth yearly in the mansion house and one close 8/-, in rents and farms of divers burgages £4 3s. 3d., in the whole £4 11s. 3d." And in 1 Edward VI., 1547, the commissioners report that "as to Appleby there is a stipendiary used to celebrate divine service in the parish church there and keep a free grammar school." The king's injunctions of the same year contain the item "that all chauncry priests shall exercise themselves in teaching youth to read and write, and bring them up in good manners and other virtuous exercises."

Next year, 1548, the chantries were dissolved. In 1549, a commission was sent to take order for the maintenance of schools, preachers, priests, and curates. The commissioners ordered "that a certain grammar school, which long before had been kept at Appleby should continue, and that Edward Gybson then schoolmaster should have £5 8 0 yearly." It seems, however, that in the succeeding reign Mr. Gybson complained that his stipend was not paid regularly. An exchequer decree 3 & 4 Philip & Mary 1556, preserved in the school chest, orders the arrears to be discharged and £5 10s. 8d. to be regularly paid to him and his successors out of the rectory of Crosby Ravensworth.

We

We now leave behind the earlier and more or less fragmentary annals of the school and step on to the firmer ground of what may be called the middle period of its history. This opens with its refoundation under Royal Charter. Queen Elizabeth, by her letters patent dated March, 1573, ordered

that there should be a Grammar School at Appleby, to be called the Free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, by the foundation of the Burgesses there, to consist of Master and Usher and Ten discreet and Honest men to be called the Governors, to be a Body Corporative with the Common Seal, to plead and be impledged and to have licence to take lands not exceeding the clear yearly value of £40 to elect Head Master and Usher, and in case of vacancy among their Body to choose other fit persons “de inhabitantibus vel liberis tenantibus” of the said town.

Barnaby Machell, John Hartley, Reynold Hartley, John Robinson and others, were the first govenors.



A glance at the seal of the school suggests the agency by which the new scheme was brought about. We see prominent on the rim of the seal the name of R. Hartley, who was prime mover of the petition for the charter. The device, a hart in a lea or meadow, is a punning allusion to

to his name. In smaller letters across the seal are seen the names of Langton and Spenser, benefactors then deceased. Miles Spencer, in his will of 1569, bequeathed trust money from Langton and money of his own. He wished Queen's College, Oxford, to take the money and charge the rectory of Brough with an annual payment to the head master. On the college declining to do this, Reginald Hartley ultimately made the sum up to £300 which, in 1576, purchased the rent-charge of £20 a year on the estate of Newton Garths in the county of Durham.

Reginald Bainbrigg, M.A., of Queen's College, a native of Hilton, is generally supposed to have been the first master of the Elizabethan school. His licence to be schoolmaster of Appleby from John Bishop of Carlisle bears the date December 19th, 1580, nearly seven years subsequent to the charter of incorporation. There is such a wide gap between Gybson and him, that, if there was no interregnum, the name of some master must have dropped from the list. When Mr. Bainbrigg took the reins, the school property did not include either the ground on which the present school and master's house stand, or the garden in front. He owned, I presume, the old chantry mansion house which after his day was converted to less noble uses. Inscriptions carved probably by his own hand, are to be seen on the walls viz : " R.B. 1601 " and " R. Bainebrig Hoc. CEd. Hipodidascalis,* D.D. in PP., 1606," i.e., " Reginald Bainbrigg gave this building to the Ushers for ever 1606." Now 1606 is the date of Bainbrigg's will in which he bequeaths his mansion to the ushers of the school and their successors, with a clause for re-entry by his rightful heirs in case of alienation. He also had available a small building in Broad Close, not far from the wall in which his copies of Roman inscriptions &c., are inserted. I have quoted above the item of " the Mansion and one

* "Hypodidascalis" would be the more correct way of spelling the word.

Close "

Close" in the valuation of the chantry property of 26 Henry VIII., and elsewhere we find mention of "Schole House, Orchard and Close." I think the explanation of this is that a portion of the large field now called Broad Close, and which consists of several old burgages thrown together, was formerly chantry property, and on it may have grown the trees, whose fruits Leonard Langhorn, chantry priest and schoolmaster, had as part of his endowment in the year 1515. Traces of the foundations of walls are still to be discerned in this spot. An old plan of Appleby shows the boundary walls and the site of "the Little Schole," which (to quote a report furnished by Mr. Jackson, headmaster, in 1681,) "Robert Langton and Miles Spenser, Doctors of Civil Law, built in the Orchard and Close before the Schole" *i.e.*, in front of the school of his day which, like the present one, faced towards Broad Close. In Mr. Jackson's time "The Little Schole" was commonly called "the Garden House," although its old name was still on its walls, and the chantry house had become a barn and stable (where were Mr. Bainbrigg's rightful heirs?) and it, along with the garth behind the barn and the orchard and close, had passed, how, nobody knew, into the possession of Alan Bellingham* of Levens, from whom the property was then leased. Perhaps a search in the archives of the present owners of Broad Close, might show what grounds there were for the vague suspicion of usurpation and encroachment which seems to have been floating in the minds of men in 1681. By the bye, when a call was made for deeds from the school chest in 1756, the Bellingham lease could not be found.

Mr. Bainbrigg seems to have devoted all his energies to the advancement of the school. A contemporary writer

* Alan Bellingham died, 1690, having sold his Westmorland property to Colonel Grahame, whose heiress married Henry Bowes Howard, Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire.

on the antiquities of Westmorland, who speaks of the sessions and assizes being held in the castle, where the gaol was, has this notice of the school.

In the nether end is the church and thereby a schoole, which Robert Langton and Miles Spenser, Doctors of the Law, founded, the maister whereof is Reginald Bainbrigg, a right learned man, who governeth the same with great commendation.

As the school flourished he must have felt increasingly the need of more space.

In the memorable year of 1588, when, I daresay, the boys had a holiday and helped to swell the burghers' shouts for the victory over the Spanish fleet, their master must have been encouraged, in a quiet way, by the terms of R. Hartley's will, under which the sum of £2 was left to Mr. Bainbrigg by his old friend; £40 was left to the governors on condition that within five years of the testator's decease, they purchased the close at the back of the school; or if, instead, they built a new schoolhouse a sum of £6 13s. 4d. towards the building thereof. In an old hand there is written on this will "The Broad Close." No doubt "the close at the back of the school" referred to in the will is the portion of the field which extends from the schoolhouse, orchard and close, to the butts. I am confirmed in this opinion by a paper in Latin which Mr. C. B. Norcliffe in his valuable schedule of writings in the school chest &c., considers to be in Mr. Bainbrigg's handwriting. It is as follows :

Fundum meum quem colui qui vocatur "Brode Close" cui ab aquilone Flumen est Edena quod partem ejus alluit, meta "The Butts" qui locus antiquitus destinatus est puerorum lusibus, ab austro locus qui vocatur "The Schoolhouse, Orchard, and Close" ab ortu publica via, quæ dicit ad "Le Butts". Ab Occasu Flumen Edena quæ unum ejus latus alluit, meis successoribus scholareis sub condicione perpetue possidendum relinquo.

Was the writer of this paper indulging in the day dream of buying

buying the land with the help of R. Hartley's £40, farming it during his life and then leaving it to his successors? If this were so, the project somehow miscarried and Hartley's £40 was never claimed.

Time went on; Bainbrigg lived through the dark days of the plague of 1598, recorded in one of his inscriptions, when the country folk durst not come to Appleby and the market was held near Cliburn, and at last he saw his way to secure the smaller bequest of £6 13s. 4d., by setting on foot the erection of a new school. In 1603, C. Walker, vicar of St. Lawrence, one of six new governors appointed in 1589, granted him the site of the present school and master's house at a ground rent of 6d., yearly, and Miles Hartley sold him Peartree Garth, now the front garden, for about the sum of £2 which R. Hartley had bequeathed him. This same Peartree Garth had been granted in 1490 to Henry Smith, chantry priest, by Henry, Lord Clifford, the shepherd lord of Wordsworth's poem, whose signature to the deed in the school chest does not confirm the tradition of his illiteracy. Mr. Bainbrigg bequeathed this garth to the school "ut ibi successores mei litteris vacare possint." It gave a vote for the borough and in 1681 Mr. Jackson says it paid 10d. a year quit rent to Appleby Castle. Mr. Bainbrigg also bequeathed the materials collected by him and left over after building the school described by Mr. Jackson as "the school that now is" which, he says, Reginald Bainbrigg built, together with a closet on the east side, for his books. His books and furniture he left to the school, and a burgage to William Lowther, head boy, and his successors to make every 11th of May "duo paria carminum" in honour of Robert Langton and Miles Spenser, founders of the school, and of him the testator. His will was proved in 1613. The school built by him, subject to repairs and improvements from time to time, remained substantially the same until 1826, when it was entirely rebuilt and enlarged from the

the Temple Sowerby trust founded by Ann, Countess of Pembroke in 1756.

As old Appleby boys went forth from the school and had prosperous careers, they did not neglect the place of their first education. In 1661, Dr. Thomas Smith, born at Asby, and educated at this school, procured from the dean and chapter of Carlisle a lease of the Drybeck tithes which is renewed for 21 years to each new master and brings £30 yearly, less £3 3s. 4d., reserved for the dean and chapter.

Ten years later, in 1671, the same Dr. Smith, afterwards bishop of Carlisle, was joined in a good work by others of his school fellows. These were the Rev. Randal Sanderson, a native of Regill, rector of Weyhill in Hampshire, Dr. Barlow, provost of Queen's college, afterwards bishop of Lincoln, a native of Orton, and Sir John Lowther second of that name. Dr. Smith gave £200, Randal Sanderson £300, Dr. Barlow £100 in money and books over valued, in bishop Nicolson's opinion at another £100, and Sir John Lowther £100. An agreement was made at this time transferring the right of nominating the master from the governors to the college. This arrangement, which has its advantages, but no legal validity, has since been usually, though not invariably, acted upon. Of this sum total of £700, £60 were paid to Mr. Edmundson on his resignation, the college nominating in his stead Richard Jackson, whose report I have often alluded to, and who had been successively master of Bampton and Kendal grammar schools, £40 was reserved towards building the head master's house, which, as the inscription over the entrance testifies, was built in the year 1671 at the joint charges of Smith and Sanderson. A few years later it is recorded that

Mr. Randel Sanderson did give £30 to be expended in planking the floor of the schole, renewing the tables and seats and enlarging the windows

windows on the back side of the schole, sieling the chambers in the first loft, &c.

The remainder went to the purchase of the new hall estate in 1684.

We have now reached a period of about two centuries ago. There is much in its later annals which is interesting, but hardly from an archaeological point of view. Pardon me if I just say, before I conclude, that I have heard my grandfather speak of the fame of this little northern school during the reign of Mr. Richard Yates, whose epitaph by Archdeacon Paley is well known. His Latin translation of the Spectator is in MSS. in the school library. It is noteworthy that Lancelot Addison, dean of Lichfield, the father of the essayist, was a native of Mauld's Meaburn, and was a pupil of Mr. Bainbrigg's successor, William Pickering. An old parchment roll of benefactors to the school library shows that in Mr. Yate's time Featherstonhaughs, Musgraves, Machels, Briscos, Hasells, Crackenthorpes, Wyberghs, as well as Langhorn, one of the translators of Plutarch, and the elder brother of the famous George Washington attended the school, with others who inherited or achieved for themselves honoured names.

Mr. Yate's successor was the Rev. John Waller whose inscription "J.W. restaur. 1798" is by the side of those of Bainbrigg's on the old mansion wall. My father, who was under him, used to say that the old school had a low ceiling and was much too small for 99 boys whom Mr. Waller had at one time in attendance. Just noting the exhibition of £40 a year founded by Thomas, Earl of Thanet in 1720, which is confined to this school, and that of Lady Elizabeth Hastings in 1739, shared by it with other northern schools, I will trespass no longer on your time and your forbearance.
